

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

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ATTACHMENT

April 7, 1961

Dear Mr. President:


I dictated the enclosed memorandum for you following a brief discussion in your office about some of the longer range projects which are underway here in the Department.

However, because of the pressure during Dean Rusk's absence, it was not fully typed at that time.

Even though some of it has been overtaken by events, I am sending it on belatedly, as I thought some of it might interest you.

With my warmest regards,

Sincerely,


Chester Bowles

Enclosure

The President,
The White House

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

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EYES ONLY

March 29, 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Here is a brief outline of some of the studies now going on in the Department of State to which I referred in our conversation in your office on Monday.

Some of them are urgent; all, I believe, are important.

1. A broad reappraisal of our position in regard to China. This seeks to answer the following questions:

A. What is our proper relation to the Chinese Civil War? Is its continuation in our own national interest? Until this question has been clearly answered, our policies in East Asia will often suffer from expediency.

B. What can or should we do about Quemoy and Matsu? In particular, what about our implied commitment to their defense?

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2. Intermediate Missile Bases in Turkey, Britain, and Italy.

The Acheson report stressed the vulnerability of these bases, their provocative "first strike" appearances as the Soviets see them, and their diminishing military importance in view of the greatly expanded Polaris and Minuteman programs.

The Atomic Energy Committee and the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy are also concerned about the posture we inherited from the previous administration in regard to these particular installations.

George McGhee has undertaken a study of these questions in light of the commitments already made. This report will be ready soon.

3. Soviet Pressure on Berlin - Increasing Soviet pressure for change in the status of Berlin is likely to be applied in the near future. It will be unfortunate if we are caught in a wholly negative position.

Is there

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Is there not some valid proposal that would enable us to go beyond our "stand firm" posture in regard to Berlin itself to suggest a fresh approach to the entire European military impasse?

One possibility involves an agreement for step-by-step reduction of all forces with full inspection between the Urals and the English Channel, while leaving the present political confrontation unchanged.

I suggested this possibility to Khrushchev in a meeting I had with him in February 1957. In March, 1958, an almost identical proposal was advanced by de Gaulle.

A few days later at a press conference, Adenauer said, "As the result of discussion with responsible military bodies, I am in a position, putting it quite generally, to subscribe to what General de Gaulle has said about the size, extent and nature of a so-called zone of relaxed tensions. . . . Such a zone would only serve its purpose if disarmament were carried out from the Atlantic to the Urals."

Conceivably (although

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Conceivably (although admittedly unlikely) this concept might appeal to the Soviet as a means of freeing resources, military or otherwise, which may be needed in the coming decade to cope with the Chinese pressure from the East and South. In our interests it would relieve much of the present military pressure on Western Europe without interfering with the major nuclear deterrent on either side.

Even though it were rejected by the Kremlin, a fresh initiative of this kind by us would make a favorable impression on world opinion, and help underscore the narrowness and sterility of whatever proposals the Soviet may make in regard to Berlin.

It would also help to free us from the disadvantageous impasse into which we are drawn by Soviet insistence on "general and complete disarmament."

I have discussed this with Dean Acheson who thought it worth exploring. Its implications, of course, are far reaching, and it will take the most careful consideration before it could be advanced as a serious proposal.

4. Fresh

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